(Ireland.)

COPY OF THE REPORT

Of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, from the 25th of March 1822, to the 25th of March 1823.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,* 26 *May* 1823.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY RICHARD MARQUESS WELLESLEY, LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

WE the Commissioners of Education in Ireland, in obedience to the Act of Parliament made in the fifty-third year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Third, respectfully submit to Your Excellency a general Report of our Proceedings, from the 25th day of March 1822, to the 25th day of March 1823.

The partial insubordination and general distress of the tenantry of the School-lands of Enniskillen have necessarily caused a considerable arrear of the rents of those lands to become due to this Board; and the income of the School Estates being for the present insufficient to meet all the charges affecting it; we have been compelled to avail ourselves of a clause in the Act of the last Session, which empowers us to apply the Surplus Funds of one Royal School to the maintenance and improvement of another; and accordingly, we have subtracted the sum of 300 *l.* from the Surplus Funds of Dungannon School, and applied it in part payment of a charge of 1,300 *l.* due to Doctor Burrowes (now Dean of Cork) the late Master of Enniskillen School, in respect of improvements made by him on the School-house of Enniskillen; and it is proper to state, that Doctor Burrowes, considering that the interests of that School might be materially affected were the sums necessary for the liquidation of the balance due to him to be taken from the income of the School in the first instance, leaving the salaries of the present Master and Ushers unpaid, has acquiesced in the arrangements made by the Board for the gradual discharge of that balance, as the circumstances of the estates may permit.

The former Reports of this Board, detailed to Your Excellency and to Earl Talbot the great embarrassment of the funds of Raphoe School, attributable to various causes, but especially to the lawless combination of the tenants, most of whom have subsisted on the profits of illicit distillation; the effects of those embarrassments had been such, that though the first and second Masters of the School continued (under every disadvantage) the regular performance of their duties, a heavy arrear of their salaries accrued, for the discharge of which it was incumbent on this Board to provide.

There being a surplus of income of Dungannon School, we have paid thereout the sum of 1,200 *l.* to the first and second Masters of Raphoe School, on account of their arrear; and we have also discharged the further sum of 1,000 *l.* of the arrears due to the first Master, in the manner hereinafter stated to Your Excellency.

The tenants of the School Estates of Raphoe, bound in one common confederacy, having controverted the title of the Board to the School Estates; and an ejectment on the title having been necessarily brought to enable the Board to assert their title, and to remove such of the tenants as were the most refractory;

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separate defences were litigiously taken, by several of the tenants, to those ejectments; and after trials thereof at the assizes for the county of Donegal, verdicts were obtained against all the defendants; subject however to certain points of law reserved for the consideration of the Court of King's Bench.

Since the date of our last Report, judgment was pronounced by the Court in favour of the Board in the several causes, and we have caused writs of habere facias possessionem to issue on the judgments; but in order to defray the expense of such proceedings, this Board was under the necessity of applying for an advance of a sum of 350*l.* to their Solicitor, from the consolidated fund, which was accordingly issued.

Having obtained the said judgments and writs of habere, we considered it expedient to advertise the School Lands of Raphoe to be set for the term of twenty-one years, and caused advertisements accordingly to be published for that purpose; but not having received any adequate offer, and considering that it would be quite impossible for this Board in the present times to manage and control a numerous, wild, and distant tenantry, chiefly composed of the present occupiers, habituated to turbulence and litigation; and in order to save the public money from being expended in costs, we thought it the wisest course to propose to the Head Master of the School, the Reverend James Irwin, to become our tenant during his incumbency, on being armed with the powers now vested in us, which proposal he has after considerable hesitation accepted.

He has accordingly contracted with this Board for a lease of the School Estates, to be made to him from the first of November last, during his incumbency as Master, at a rent of 500*l.* a year, (which will provide for his growing salary and that of the Second Master), and to pay to the Board the sum of 1,000*l.*, by giving credit for the same out of the arrear of salary remaining due to him, he being permitted to retain for his own use such part of the arrears of rent due by the present defaulting tenants, as he may be able to receive. And we have a strong expectation, that under the prudent management of the Master, resident in the county, and by reason of the measures contemplated by Parliament for the suppression of illicit distillation, such a change will be effected in respect of the tenants, that when the incumbency of the present Master shall cease, it will be in the power of the Board to deal with the occupying tenants, and to improve the School Establishment; and we look forward to the period when this Board shall be enabled to give its undivided attention to the system of Education, without being embarrassed with subjects of finance.

Since our last Report, the Reverend Doctor Alan Bell has been promoted to the Mastership of the School of Banagher, on the resignation of the Reverend Mr. Morris, and we have appointed Doctor Bell the agent and receiver of the School Rents, with a direction to examine and inquire into the circumstances and solvency of the tenants, and of the nature and duration of their several tenures, (having recourse to the surveys made by the order of the Board), and to report to us specially on such matters, in order that the School Lands may be set to advantage, so that we may allocate a sufficient salary to Doctor Bell, and make a better provision for the School.

The tenants of the Estates of the School of Carysfort having continued to decline either to accept leases, even at the reduced valuation, or to pay up their arrears of rent, we were under the necessity of sending down our Solicitor to the lands, in the expectation that he, in concert with our Land Agent, would introduce order amongst the tenantry; but his mission has not as yet been attended with any very beneficial effects; so that we have been hitherto unable to contract for the building of a proper School-house, according to our intentions. It is proper also to state, that the possession of the scite intended for such building, and a few acres of land adjoining, proposed to be allocated for the use of the School Master, is wrongfully detained by a Mrs. Carter, widow of the late Master, under a claim of title thereto, as a yearly tenant, and it will be necessary to regain the possession by course of law.

With the exception of the School of Carysfort, all the Schools of Royal Foundation are provided with school-houses, and houses of residence for the Masters and Boarders; and, without any exception, the Masters of the Royal Schools appear to us to be able, attentive, and anxious to fulfil their respective duties.

With

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With respect to the Diocesan and District Schools, we have been, by the aid of the Grant of the last Session, enabled to form a scheme for their permanent establishment, and we await the declaration of your Excellency's pleasure, (in respect of the arrangement proposed in our recent Report made to your Excellency) to issue our warrant for carrying into execution the intention of the Legislature, in relation to those Classical Free Schools, and a draft of such warrant has been laid before our Counsel.

We have the fullest confidence, that should the scheme we have submitted to Your Excellency, and which we have formed with due regard to the local situation of other Classical Seminaries, meet Your Excellency's approbation, every considerable District of Ireland, will contain a Classicall School of public or private foundation.

With respect to the School of Clonmell, which is of private endowment, we have, with the consent and approbation of the Master, entered into a treaty with the Right honourable Colonel Bagwell, for a fee farm lease, to be granted by him to this Board at the rent of one pound a year, of a small portion of ground adjacent to the town of Clonmell, whereon a School-house and Offices shall be built; the present School-house being old and decaying, and inconveniently situated; and when the title to such new scite shall be made clear, we intend to apply to Your Excellency for a loan, for the purpose of erecting the intended School-house and Improvements, on the terms of repayment proposed by the Statute.

The title to the intended scite of the School of Tullyvin, which is also of private foundation, having been made out, and a grant thereof executed to this Board, a contract has been made with builders of eminence, for the building of a School-house and Offices thereon. The works have been actually commenced, though interrupted by the severity of the season, and we will cause them to be completed with due expedition.

In relation to the School of Middleton, our endeavours to place that establishment on a complete and permanent footing have been retarded by reason of the death of his Grace the late Archbishop of Cashel, who was a Principal Acting Governor of the School, and with whom certain papers relating to it had been lodged, as we are informed, but which have not as yet been discovered.

With a view to the improvement of the general system of Education in the Schools subjected to our jurisdiction, we have transmitted to the Masters certain queries, to which their answers are to be given, to enable us to proceed in the formation of such regulations as may be necessary to effect so desirable an object.

We shall conclude by observing, that the labours of this Board would have been much more efficient, were it not for the fluctuation of the incomes of the Schools committed to its care, and that in our judgment the improvement of the School Establishments, would be more likely to be advanced by the certainty, than the magnitude of their funds.

W. DUBLIN, (seal.)
S. KYLE. (seal.)
J. LESLIE FOSTER, (seal.)
JOHN RADCLIFF, (seal.)

25th March 1823.

C. W. Walker,
Secretary.

A true Copy.
W. Gregory.

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